

Message Text

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ACTION CU-04

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FM AMCONSUL MARTINIQUE
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2156

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: FWI, OXEC

SUBJECT: REQUEST FOR USAF AIRCRAFT TRANSPORT

1. DURING RECENT CONSULAR VISIT TO GUADELOUPE, THE PREFET
RAISED A MATTER WITH ME, SUBSEQUENTLY CONFIRMED VIA OFFICIAL
WRITTEN REQUEST, CONCERNING AN EXCHANGE OF 35 GUADELOUPEAN
SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH SIMILAR GROUP OF AMERICAN STUDENTS
IN NEW ORLEANS AND BATON ROUGE.

2. GUADELOUPEAN EDUCATION OFFICIALS HAVE ARRANGED FOR THE EXCHANGE
TO TAKE PLACE THIS SUMMER FOR ABOUT ONE-TWO MONTH PERIOD.
ITS AIM WOULD PARTIALLY BE PROMOTION OF US FRENCH RELATIONS,
IT WOULD BE UNIQUE IN THE HISTORY OF THE FRENCH ANTILLES. GIVEN
THE LACK OF US-FRENCH ANTILLES CULTURAL CONTACTS AND RELATIONS
SINCE THE CLOSING OF THE USIS CENTER HERE AND IN POINTE-A-PITRE
SEVERAL YEARS AGO, WE BELIEVE THAT THE PROJECT IS WELL WORTH
WHILE AND WE SHOULD SUPPORT IT.

3. THE PREFET PLANS THAT A FRENCH AIR FORCE TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT
WOULD MOVE THE FRENCH GROUP TO LOUISIANA AND THE AMERICAN
GROUP TO GUADELOUPE. HE HOPES THAT USAF TRANSPORT COULD BE
MADE AVAILABLE TO RETURN THE GROUPS HOME, I.E. THE AMERICAN STUDENTS
TO LOUISIANA AND THE FRENCH TO GUADELOUPE ONE OR TWO MONTHS LATER.
COST OF THE FLIGHT WOULD BE RELATIVELY LOW, AND THE US PARTICIPATION
WOULD BE HIGHLY PUBLICIZED AND GAIN US A NOT INCONSIDERABLE
AMOUNT OF GOODWILL. A ONE-TIME PROJECT SUCH AS THIS WOULD DO
SOMETHING TO OFFSET THE CRITICISM OF UNITED STATES WHICH LOCAL
LEFTWING JOURNALS CONSTANTLY LEVEL.

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4. GUADELOUPE AUTHORITIES HAVE ASKED US TO SEEK THE DOD/STATE

APPROVAL OF ONE FLIGHT BY A USAF TRANSPORT AIRCRAFT THIS SUMMER FROM NEW ORLEANS TO POINTE-A-PITRE AND RETURN. THE FINAL DATES HAVE NOT YET BEEN SET, AND THE SUCCESS OF THE EXCHANGE DEPENDS LARGELY ON THE USG'S AGREEMENT IN PRINCIPLE TO TAKE PART IN THE PROJECT. AIR TRAVEL IS THE ONLY PRACTICABLE MEANS OF TRANSPORT, BUT NEITHER THE LOUISIANAN NOR GUADELOUPEAN GROUPS HAVE THE FUNDS TO UNDERTAKE THE TRIP.

5. AS STATED WE STRONGLY ENDORSE THE PROJECT AND HOPE DOD/STATE WILL AGREE TO MAKING A USAF CRAFT AVAILABLE. REQUEST DEPARTMENT'S ADVICE FOR RESPONDING TO PREFET'S LETTER.
SHACKLETON

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Margaret P. Grafeld
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